

*FACULTY AND
GUEST ARTIST RECITAL*

ABIGAIL FISCHER, mezzo-soprano (guest)

KENNETH GOLDSMITH, violin

JAMES DUNHAM, viola

NORMAN FISCHER, cello

JEANNE KIERMAN, piano

Monday, October 8, 2007

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Laudamus te

from Mass in B Minor (1733)

Johann Sebastian Bach

(1685-1750)

Abigail Fischer, mezzo-soprano

Kenneth Goldsmith, violin

Norman Fischer, cello

Jeanne Kierman, piano

Two Songs, Op. 91 (1884)

Johannes Brahms

I. Gestillte Sehnsucht

(1833-1897)

II. Geistliches Wiegenlied

Abigail Fischer, mezzo-soprano

James Dunham, viola

Jeanne Kierman, piano

Sonata for Viola and Piano (2001)

Libby Larsen

I. Flow

(b. 1950)

II. Drift

III. Breathless

James Dunham, viola

Jeanne Kierman, piano

INTERMISSION

Quartet in A Major for Piano and Strings, Op. 26 (1861-62)

Johannes Brahms

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Poco adagio

III. Scherzo. Poco allegro

IV. Finale. Allegro

Kenneth Goldsmith, violin

James Dunham, viola

Norman Fischer, cello

Jeanne Kierman, piano

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

TRANSLATIONS

Laudamus te

*We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee.*

Gestillte Sehnsucht (Appeased Desire)

*Steeped in the golden light of evening,
How solemnly the forests stand!
In the soft voices of birds breathes
The gentle stirring of the evening wind.
What whisper the wind and the birds?
They whisper the world to sleep.
Desires which always arise
In the heart that is without peace or rest,
Longings that trouble the soul,
When will you rest, when will you cease?
To the sounds of whispering wind and the birds,
You longing desires, when will you be lulled to sleep?
When no longer into golden distances
My spirit hastens on wings of dreams,
No longer on the eternal distant stars
My eyes are fixed with a longing gaze;
The winds, the birds, shall lull
My life and my longings.*

— Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866)
English translation by Waldo Lyman

Geistliches Wiegenlied (Sacred Lullaby)

*Joseph, my good Joseph,
Help me to rock my darling child,
God will be the one to reward you
In the Heavenly Kingdom of the Virgin's Son,
Maria, Maria.
You who fly above these palm trees
In the night and the wind,
You holy angels, silence the treetops!
My child is asleep.
You palms of Bethlehem, in the raging wind,
How can you rustle so angrily today,
Do not sough thus, be silent,
Sway softly and gently.
Silence the treetops! My child is asleep.
The Child of Heaven suffers pain;
He was so weary of the sorrows of the earth.
Now gently soothed in sleep,
The agony leaves him.
Silence the treetops, my child is asleep.
Bitter cold descends,
With what can I cover my child's limbs!
All you angels, who on wings
Hover in the air,
Silence the treetops, my child is asleep.*

— Lope de Vega (1562-1635)
English translation by Waldo Lyman

PROGRAM NOTE

Sonata for Viola and Piano Libby Larsen

James [Dunham] and I met while I was working on a commission for the Cleveland String Quartet. We like each other's energy and had compatible views about music. I was dazzled by his musicianship and his genial and generous ways. I knew right away that I wanted to compose a viola sonata for him. In fact, the sonata came into my head almost full blown right after I met him.

Composing for viola is a particularly rewarding endeavor. Its mid-range lyricism and quiet ways demand a sensitive ear, especially to dynamics. I tend to think in bolder strokes, dynamically speaking. I found that I had to calm my ears down for this work, composing more subtle gestures which are, at the same time, bold. It was James' playing and musicianship that brought the piece into my head. James has a gift for the supported lyric line; he is able to support a lyric line with deep and strong rhythm, while at the same time never letting you know that.

The work is in three movements, I adopted the formality of the sonata much in the same way an architect accepts the shell of a building and rehabilitates the interior. I often draw influences from extramusical influence. This work is about viola and piano, nothing more, nothing less. It seems that when I compose for strings, as in my string symphony, I focus on the quality of the instrument for its purely communicative powers, leaving any extra-musical interpretation to the listener.

[About treatment of the viola]: With great respect! Not one single viola joke! There is one passage in which the viola simply and quietly plays a harmonic on C, while the piano works quietly around it. My question: can the lyric voice exist in a single note melody? Can eloquence come as a result of nonmotion?

— Note based on an interview with the composer in the magazine *The Strad*

BIOGRAPHIES

Mezzo-soprano ABIGAIL FISCHER is a versatile singer whose has been praised for her "sumptuous" (*The Boston Globe*) and "impressive" (*Newsweek*) voice. Equally adept at music from the Baroque era and contemporary work, Ms. Fischer has performed regularly with New York Collegium (Andrew Parrott, conductor) and Early Music New York (Frederick Renz, director), and has given world premieres of new music by John Zorn, Nico Muhly, Bernard Rands, and the Bang on a Can artists. Ms. Fischer has collaborated with other well-known early music artists including Paul O'Dette, Ellen Hargis, and George Steel's VOX Vocal Ensemble. Recent highlights include starring as Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* with the Bronx Opera, and soloing in performances with the Trinity Wall Street Choir and the renowned Rebel Ensemble. In 2006 she was the principal guest artist with the new music ensemble Continuum on their 2006 tour to Jakarta, performing in the Probowo opera *The Kings Witch*. She also appeared with the Center for Contemporary Opera in the premiere of Peter Westergaard's *Alice in Wonderland*, and was a member of a pioneer group of vocalists at the Lucerne Festival Academy under the direction of Daniel Reuss and Pierre Boulez.

Ms. Fischer has performed many other opera roles including Cherubino in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mother Marie in Poulenc's *The Dialogue of the Carmelites*, Sesto in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, Mrs. Lovett in Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, Ma Moss in Copland's *The Tender*

Land, and Jean in Massenet's one-act *Le Portrait de Manon*. She has soloed in numerous works, including Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Handel's *The Messiah*, William Albright's *Song to David*, Bach's *Magnificat*, and Mozart's *Mass in C*. Abigail Fischer has a Master of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vassar College.

KENNETH GOLDSMITH, Professor of Violin at The Shepherd School of Music, has an active career as a chamber musician, soloist, concertmaster, and teacher. A founding member of the Mirecourt Trio, the Camerata Quartet, the Nashville String Quartet, CONTEXT, and the Stanford Chamber Players, he was also violinist of the Fromm Foundation Quartet, the American Arts Quartet, the Claremont Festival Quartet, and the Lyric Art Quartet. In 1962 Mr. Goldsmith won both the Young Concert Artists Competition and the Concert Artists Guild Award in New York City; in 1976 his piano trio, the Mirecourt Trio, was a finalist in the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Competition, and in 1980, he received a special award at the Kennedy-Rockefeller International Violin Competition in Washington, D.C.

Trained by Mischa Mischakoff, Toscanini's concertmaster of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Goldsmith's orchestral career began in 1958, when he was the youngest member of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. He has been concertmaster of several American symphony orchestras, and during the 1960s and 1970s, he performed with virtually every major conductor and soloist of that time. In addition to Mischa Mischakoff, principal teachers and major influences in his musical training were William Kroll, Nathan Milstein, and Pablo Casals.

As violinist of the Mirecourt Trio, Mr. Goldsmith has concertized and given master classes throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. His extensive discography includes recordings on several record labels, including ABC, Music & Arts, Cinnabar Records, Albany, CRI, Varèse Sarabande, and Zephyr. He has received a Grammy Award nomination, a Stereo Review "Record of Special Merit" award, and a "Record of the Year" citation from The Village Voice. Students of Mr. Goldsmith enjoy careers in major orchestras, in period music ensembles, and in professional quartets and trios throughout the United States and Europe.

Violist JAMES DUNHAM is active as a recitalist and guest artist. He has collaborated with such renowned artists as Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Lynn Harrell, Cho-Liang Lin and members of the American, Cassatt, Guarneri, Juilliard, Takács, Tokyo, and Ying Quartets. An advocate of new music, he recently premiered and recorded two works by Libby Larsen — her *Viola Sonata* (2001) and *Sifting Through the Ruins* (2005) for viola, mezzo-soprano (Susanne Mentzer) and piano, due for release by Naxos. Summers are spent at festivals including Sarasota, Amelia Island (Florida), Aspen, La Jolla Chamber Music Festival, and le Domaine Forget (Quebec), with past participation in Festival der Zukunft (Ernen, Switzerland), the San Diego Mainly Mozart Festival, and three summers at the Marlboro Music Festival. Highlights of recent seasons included a pair of concerts with the Takács Quartet in Carnegie Hall, concerts in Reykjavik, Iceland, returns to San Diego, San Francisco, New York, and Vermont, as well as regular engagements with Houston Friends of Music and Da Camera of Houston. Other recording projects have included *Glyph* by Judith Shatin for solo viola with string quartet and piano, and the recently released Telarc recording of Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* with the Ying Quartet and cellist Paul Katz.

Violist of the 1996 Grammy Award-winning Cleveland Quartet for eight years, James Dunham performed throughout North America, Europe, the

Far East, and the Soviet Union. Founding violist of the Naumburg Award winning Sequoia String Quartet, he formerly taught at California Institute of the Arts, the Eastman School of Music, and the New England Conservatory, where he also chaired the String Department and received the Louis & Adrienne Krasner Teaching Excellence Award. Mr. Dunham is Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at The Shepherd School of Music where he directs the Master of Music in String Quartet program.

NORMAN FISCHER is one of America's most versatile cellists. After completing instrumental study with Richard Kapuscinski, Claus Adam, and Bernard Greenhouse, he first graced the international concert stage as cellist with the Concord String Quartet, a group that won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, an Emmy and several Grammy nominations, and recorded over forty works on RCA Red Seal, Vox, Nonesuch, Turnabout, and CRI.

In addition to performing the major concertos, Mr. Fischer has premiered and recorded many new scores for cello and orchestra. His chamber music expertise has led to guest appearances with the Juilliard, Cleveland, Emerson, American, Chiara, Chester, Ensō, Blair, Schoenberg, Ciampi, Mendelssohn, and Audubon string quartets, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Ann Arbor, Chamber Music International, CONTEXT, and Da Camera of Houston.

Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanne Kierman have performed together as the Fischer Duo for over thirty-five years. The Fischer Duo has been widely praised by music critics for its choice of repertoire. Thoroughly versed in the classical repertoire of Beethoven, Brahms, and Schumann, the Fischer Duo has acquired an equally impressive reputation for rediscovering neglected works of the past (Busoni, Foote, Boulanger, and Liszt). They have commissioned many new scores by contemporary composers such as Augusta Read Thomas, George Rochberg, David Stock, Robert Sirota, Shih-Hui Chen, Anthony Brandt, Richard Lavenda, Pierre Jalbert, and Richard Wilson. In October 2002 they launched a new chamber music festival in Vermont with violinist Curtis Macomber. Mr. Fischer is currently Professor of Violoncello and Coordinator of Chamber Music at The Shepherd School of Music.

JEANNE KIERMAN has served as Artist Teacher of Piano at The Shepherd School for the last fourteen years. In the 1970s and '80s, Ms. Kierman toured extensively under the sponsorship of the New England Foundation and the Vermont Arts Council as a member of the Alcott Piano Quartet. More recently, she has performed for Da Camera of Houston, Mohawk Trail Concerts, Vermont Musica Viva, Chamber Music Ann Arbor, Skaneateles and the Marrowstone Festival among others. As pianist with The Fischer Duo, Ms. Kierman has performed all over the United States for thirty-five years, and in 1996 and 1997 toured for the United States Information Agency as an Artistic Ambassador to South America and South Africa. Ms. Kierman has written about her experiences as a collaborative pianist for Piano and Keyboard Magazine and has recorded for Northeastern, Gasparo, Albany, and Bridge Records. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the Dalcroze School, and the New England Conservatory, she studied piano with William Masselos, Miles Mauney, Victor Rosenbaum, and Menahem Pressler. Before the Shepherd School, Ms. Kierman formerly served on the faculties of the Oberlin Conservatory and Dartmouth College. In the summer months, Ms. Kierman works with students in piano chamber music at the Greenwood Music Camp in Massachusetts and performs also with the Concord Trio.



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